

## No Dependable Source of Iron for Infants at 6 Months of Age or Later

### Definition/ cut-off value

No routine age-appropriate iron source at 6 months of age or later, such as:

- iron-fortified cereals
- iron-fortified infant formula (at least 10mg of iron per liter of formula prepared at standard dilution)
- meats
- oral iron supplements

### Participant category and priority level

#### Category

Infants

#### Priority

IV

### Justification

The full-term infant is born with iron stores to last for the first 4-6 months. Preterm and low birthweight infants are born with lower iron stores which are often depleted by 2-3 months of age. Rapid growth and increased physical activity significantly increase the need for iron and utilizes iron stores. Body stores are insufficient to meet the increased iron needs making it necessary for the infant to receive a dependable source of iron to prevent iron deficiency anemia. Iron deficiency anemia is associated with cognitive and psychomotor impairments that may be irreversible. Iron deficiency anemia is also associated with decreased immune function, apathy, short attention span, and irritability.

### Clarification/ Guidelines

Before assigning this risk code, be sure diet has been accurately assessed and documented on the diet/health history form.

Breastmilk is considered an adequate source of iron up to 6 months of age. However, infants 6 months or older should be receiving iron-fortified cereal, in addition to breastmilk.

### References

1. Fomon, S.: Nutrition of Normal Infants; 1993; pp. 246-256.
2. Queen and Lang: Handbook of Pediatric Nutrition; 1993; pp. 114-115, 127-128.
3. AAP, CON: Pediatric Nutrition Handbook; 1993; pp. 231-235.
4. CDC: Recommendations to Prevent and Control Iron Deficiency in the United States; MMWR; April 1998; pp. 18-21.
5. WIC Program Regulations: Section 246.10 (c)(1)(i).

